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Indian Art & Culture

Mukesh Yadav

by

Nitin Singhania, IAS

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INDIAN ART AND CULTURE

VISUAL ART

1. Indian Architecture
2. Indian Sculpture
3. Indian Pottery
4. Indian Paintings

PERFORMING ART

1. Indian Music
2. Dance forms
3. Indian Theatre
4. Indian Puppetry
5. Indian Circus

MISC ART & CULTURE TOPICS

1. Indian Cinema
2. Languages in India
3. Religions in India
4. Indian Literature
5. Schools in Philosophy
6. Indian Handicrafts
7. Indian Calendar
8. Fairs and Festivals
9. Cultural aspects related to Medicine, Maths, Astronomy, coinage, weights and measures
10. Awards
11. Cultural institutions
12. Issue of stolen art and artefacts

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INDIAN ARCHITECTURE

Ancient Indian

1. Harappan Art (2500-1800 BC)
2. Mauryan Art (arnd 300 BC)
3. Post Mauryan Art
4. Gupta Age (319 AD - 6th cen)
5. Se- of architecture in South India

Medieval India

Delhi Sultanate (1206 - 1526)

- Imperial style (Developed by empire, a state initiative)
  - Slave dynasty (1206-1290)
  - Khiljis (1290-1320)
  - Tuglaq (1320-)
  - Lodhi
- Provincial style (other than empire)
  - Jaunpur
  - Malwa
  - Bijapur

Mughals (1526 - 18th cen)

- Babur
- Humayun
- Akbar
- Sahajahan
- Aurangzeb

Modern India

- Indo-Gothic style
- Neo-Roman style

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HARAPAN CIVILIZATION:

- Also known as the bronze age.

* Architecture refers to designing of and construction of buildings whereas sculpture is a 3-D art work of art.

In architecture, various types of materials are used i.e stone, wood, glass, metal etc. Whereas a sculpture is made up of single piece of material. Architecture involves study of engineering and engineering mathematics and depends upon measurement, whereas sculpture involves creativity and imagination, may not depend on measurements.

(I) SEALS

- Seals are a square or rectangular or circular or triangular piece of material (mainly stones) with an average size of 2" × 2". Dominantly square seals were found. On them, we find pictographic scripts alongwith animal impressions which are yet to be deciphered.
- Seals are made up of steatite (a river soft stone). Evidences of copper, gold and ivory seal has also been found in some instances.
- 5 signs or symbols on an average are present on a seal.
- Direction of writing is right to left.
- Seals are decorated with animal motifs such as unicorn, bull, rhinoceros, tiger, elephant, bison, goat, buffalo etc (except cow).
- Inscriptions or human figures are present on both sides of the seals.

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Even in some cases, these are present on all 3 sides.

Significance / Purpose of seal

i) Mainly used as a writ of trade and commerce.

ii) Also used as amulets (mainly copper seals) for protective and spiritual purpose } Found on dead bodies and had a hole for wearing

iii) Also used as an educational tool (since some contained 'pictographic' like inscriptions)

Examples: Pashupati Seal
Unicorn seal

(II) TERACOTTA FIGURES (Sculptures)

- Terracotta = fired or baked clay.
- These figures are hand-made using pinching methods.

Ex: Mother Goddess
Toy carts with wheels
Birds and animals, etc.

(III) BRONZE SCULPTURES:

- Bronze casting was practised on a wide scale under Harappan art
- The technique used for casting is known as "lost-wax technique"

Under this technique, at first wax figures are covered with a coating of clay and allowed to dry. Then it is heated and the molten wax is

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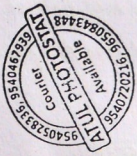
allowed to drain out through a tiny hole at the bottom of the clay cover. The hollow mould is then filled with bronze or any other metal. Once the metal is cooled, the clay is removed.

Excavations where it was prominent
- Kalibangan (Present Rajasthan)
- Daimabad (present Maharashtra)
- Harappa



Ex: Bronze dancing girl

⇒ It is a naked girl wearing only ornaments which include bangles, armlets, necklace, amulets. The left hand is on the hip. It is made using lost-wax technique.

Other stone sculptures:
- Bearded Priest
- Male Torso (red sandstone)

(IV) POTTERY - Red and black pottery (painted pottery)

wares (pottery)

- It consists of mainly 'wheel-made' wares. Very few are hand made.

red
black

- The more common is plain pottery
- Under red and black pottery, red colour was used to paint the background and black colour to draw designs of trees, birds, animals, human figures and other geometrical patterns.

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• Use of Pottery :

i) For household purposes (storage of water, food grains, etc)

ii) For decoration - Miniature vessels used for decoration (less than ½ inch)

iii) Used as perforated pottery (?)

- Large hole at the bottom and small holes all over the wall, and was probably used for straining liquor.

(V) ORNAMENTS

- They are made up of a large variety of materials ranging from precious metals, gemstones, bone and even baked clay.
- Necklaces, armlets and finger rings were common and worn by both males and females. While women wore earrings and anklets.

Evidences of dead bodies buried along with ornaments have also been found.

- Harappans were also conscious of fashion (as different hairstyles, wearing of a beard etc have been found)

Cinnabar was used as a cosmetic. lipstick, face paint and even eyeliner were all known to them.

⇒ Spinning of Cotton and Wool was common among harappans.

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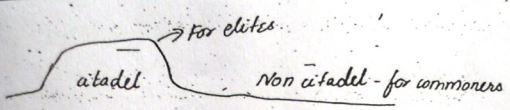
(VI) EXTENSIVE TOWN PLANNING



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Houses were built of baked bricks, of fixed sizes

Use of stone and wood in buildings has also been found

The concept of two-storeyed houses was also present

Public bath was a common feature. Ex: Great bath at Mohenjodaro

It had galleries and rooms on all sides

Granaries was another important creation which used to be located in citadel. Their construction was so intelligent that strategic structs and platforms can be found

Drainage system of harappa of was noteworthy. There was temporary cover to drains, underground

Roads used to cut at right angles

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MAURYAN ART

Mauryan Art is divided into 2:

- **COURT ART** → with state initiative
  - Ex: Pillars, stupas
- **POPULAR ART** → With individual initiative
  - Ex: Caves, Sculpture, Pottery

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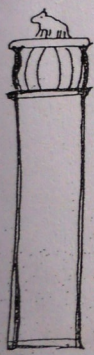
(I) PILLARS:



- Capital: Either lotus shaped or bell shaped
- Abacus: has inscriptions. (circular/ square / rectangular)
- animal: diffs types
- Shaft: made up of single piece of stone. Hence called Monolith

⇒ Mauryan pillars have outside influence. (Persian) or Iranian or Achemanian influence

& Bell shaped capitals have been taken from Persian)

- Achaemanian pillar v/s mauryan pillar

i) Shaft monolith in mauryan, whereas in achaemanian pillars it is made up of various pieces of sandstone.

ii) Achaemanian pillars not independently erected. Found in buildings.

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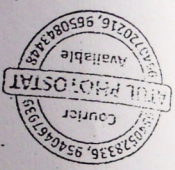
High polishing can be seen in both.

- Mauryan pillars - made up of Chunar Sandstone
  - name of place in Bihar
- Edicts are ~~inscribed~~ on pillars
- Uniformity can be seen in the pillars

- Purpose of pillars
  - i) As a symbol of the state
  - ii) To commemorate victory



Ex: Lauria Nandangarh - Champaran in Bihar
Sarnath pillar near Varanasi
↳ animals - Galloping horse, Bull, Elephant, lion*

(II) STUPAS:

- It is conventional representation of funeral cumulus, in which the ashes of the dead are buried.
- It is a Buddhist monument which is a hemispherical dome with Buddha's relics and ashes inside.

However the concept of stūpa started in the vedic period.

- In Buddhist tradition, originally 8 stupas were built after the death of Buddha.

Rajagriha, Vaishali, Kapilavastu, Allakappa, Ramagrama, Pava, Kushinagar, and Vethapida

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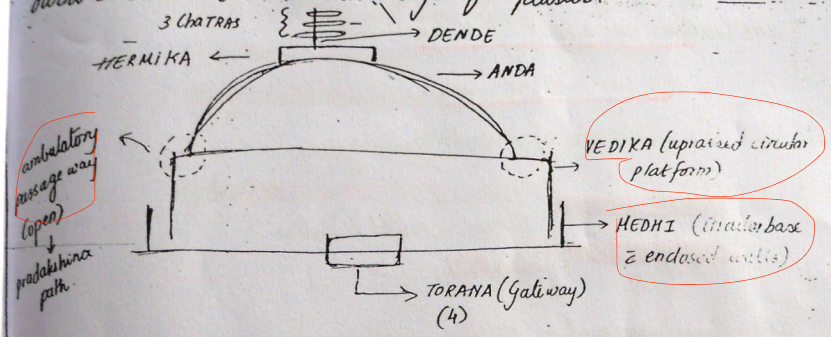
8 of them over his relics and ashes
and 9th over the vessels in which the relics were originally deposited

Core of stupa was made of unburnt brick And outer surface with burnt brick covered with a thick layer of a plaster.



⇒ CHATRAS represent TRIRATNAS of Buddhism (11th std NCERT)
(umbrella shaped)
- Buddha (enlightened)
- Dham (Dochine) dharma (the teachings)
- Sangha (order)

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⇒ Sculptures can be seen on Toranas and Medhi

Maximum number of stupas constructed by King Ashoka - 84,000
↳ Stupa received climax

Ex: Sanchi Stupa - in MP (by Ashoka)
Bharhut stupa - MP (by Shunga dynasty)
Oldest stupa - Piprahawa in UP

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MAURYAN ART

(I) CAVES

- The beginning of rock-cut architecture

Two features were added by Mauryans:

i) Polishing inside the cave.

ii) Development of Artistic Gateways.

Ex: Barabar Cave (4), Nagarjuni Cave (3) } Bihar - called 7 sisters (near Gaya)

Uses: Caves were used as Viharas in Mauryan age.

Here the Viharas were given to Jain Monks - Ajeevikas

(II) SCULPTURE

Yaksh and Yakshini

Objects of worship in folk religion

Yaksh has been found at Parkham in U.P. and also at Pawaya in Gwalior

Yakshini found at Didarganj in Bihar.

These figures are associated with all 3 religions - Jainism, Buddhism as well as Hinduism.

Buddhism - Figures found on stupas

Jainism - all 24 Jain Tirthankars are associated with a Yakshini

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Hinduism - A Tamil text 'Shilpadigaram' also mentions about Yakshini

(III) POTTERY

Northern Black Polished Ware (NBPW)

- Black colour was used
- Highly lusturous polish
- It is a luxury ware showing maturity
- Highest level of pottery making

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POST MAURYAN ART

- Caves, stupas, sculptures continued
- Sculpture making reached its climax during this stage.

(I) CAVES:

Now, two kinds of caves originated

- Chaitya
  - ↓ Prayer hall for monks
  - ↓ Karla Chaitya in Maharashtra
- Vihar
  - ↓ Residence/Rest places of Monks
  - ↓ Nashik Vihar
  - Ajanta Caves (29 caves)
    - 25 vihar
    - 4 chaitya

II) STUPAS:

Now, more enlarged stupas were built

Gateways or Toranas are now beautifully carved.

V) SCULPTURES:

In this phase, 3 schools developed in regard to sculpture making

1) Gandhara school
2) Mathura school
3) Amravati school

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Basis	Gandhara	Mathura	Amravati
• Outside influence	Greek influence or Hellenistic influence Also called Indo Greek art	Not outside influence/ indigenous	indigenous
• Type of Sandstone	Grey sandstone / Bluish-grey sandstone	Spotted red sandstone	White Marbles
• Religious influence	Mainly Buddhist	All 3 religions - Jainism, Buddhism, Hinduism	Mainly Buddhism
• Promoted by	Kushana Dynasty	Kushana Dynasty	Satvahanas and Ikshvaku IKSHVAKU DYNASTY
• Areas	Northwest frontier	Mathura, Sonkh, Kankalitila (Mostly Jain) Kankali Tila: Famous for Jain art. It yielded hundreds of Ayagapattas (worship tablets) and Tirthankara statues.	Krisha. Godavari lower valley
• Features of sculptures	- Spiritual Buddha (Sad Buddha) represents calmness - Bearded Buddha, moustache - wearing less ornaments Greek - Having wavy hair - large forehead - Buddha is seated in poution of yogi Greek - Having large ears - Eyes half closed - Protuberence on his head A cranial bump that looks like a hair bun (often styled with wavy hair in Gandhara art).	- Delighted Buddha, i.e. not spiritual - Head and face shaven - Muscularity - Dress is tight, energetic body - Buddha's face reflects grace - Seated in Padmasan Rt hand in abhay mudra (indicates devotee not to be afraid) raised abv shoulder Lt hand on left thigh (reflects muscularity) Protruberence on head	- Reflects narrative - Theme based on life of Buddha an Jataka stories - Stories of previous births of Buddha both in human as well as animal form

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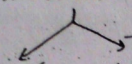
GANDHAR	MATHURA	AMRAVATI	Basi
Two schools  Early: Bluish-grey sandstone Late: Use of mud & stucco (lime plaster)	• Buddha surrounded by two Bodhisattas (Monks bound for attainment of salvations) ① Padma pani - Holding lotus ② Vajra pani - Holding Vajra/ Thunderbolt • Halo around the head of Buddha decorated with geometrical motifs. • Images of Vaishnava (mainly Vishnu & his various forms) Shiva represented through ling and Mukha ling. • Jain : Sculptures of Mahavir.		Other Features

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GUPTA AGE

Known as 'The Golden Age of Indian Architecture'.

- Beginning of Temple architecture and also reached its climax in the Gupta Age
- Greatest development in caves of cave paintings

⇒ Guptas were Brahmanical by Religion (Hindus) but they also showed their exemplary tolerance for both Buddhism and Jainism.

Early Gupta period shows emphasis on Hindu Art and later also on Buddhist and Jaina Art. Buddhist Art reached its climax during this stage.

⇒ Under Hinduism, 3 deities were worshipped →

- Vishnu → Vaishnavs (Northern & Central Part)
- Shiva → Shaivas (Southern Part)
- Shakti → In Southwest Malabar region & eastern India

(I) CAVES:

Development in cave architecture took the form of paintings

① Ajanta Caves -

Near Aurangabad in Maharashtra

29 caves in Ajanta, entirely Buddhist in theme

Caves discovered in 19th Century (1829)

Period of development 200BC to 650 AD

Out of 29, 4 are chaitiyas, 25 are viharas

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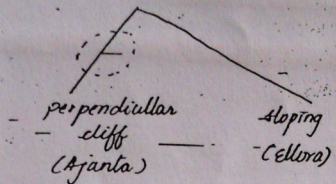
They are carved on a perpendicular cliff (unlike ellora)



As they are on perpendicular side, there are no courtyards

All three forms of Art are combined in these caves:

- > Architecture
- > Sculpture
- > Paintings - Mural paintings

Technique involved:

First step: A layer of clay mixed with cow dung and rice husks was first spread on the rough surface of the rock.

Second step: A coating of lime plaster is done

Third step: Surface was kept moist until the colour was applied (Hence they are called Fresco paintings)

Outlines are drawn in red colour, and then all colours are used except blue as it cannot be obtained from the hills

Theme: Inspired by Jataka Stories

⇒ Chinese Buddhist travellers Fa-Hien and Hiuen Tsang refer to Ajanta in account of their travel to India

Out of 29 caves, 5 belong to Hinayana period and rest 24 belong to Mahayana period

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Cave no·16 is the most elegant architecturally

Famous Fresco paintings of Ajanta:

- Dying Princess
- Flying Apsara
- Preaching Buddha

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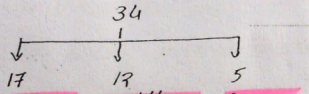
② Ellora Caves

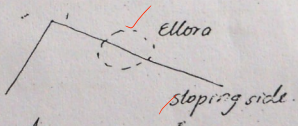
Has 34 caves

These caves are associated with all 3 religions (ur...



Excavated or carved out in sloping side of Hill.

Hence most temples have courtyards



Cave No·10 is a Chaitya dedicated to lord Vishvakarma indicating its dedication to patron saint of craftsmen

Cave No·14 - Ravana ki Khai

Cave No·15 - Dashavatar cave

Cave No·16 - Kailash temple is an architectural wonder as it is carved out of a monolith (Kailash Leni)

Ellora has even triple storeyed caves (Ajanta: double storeyed)

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Jaina caves - Indrasabha

Jagannath sabha: Smaller than Indrasabha

Same techniques of paintings used i.e mural & fresco painting.

③ Bagh Caves

Near Bagh River in Madhya Pradesh

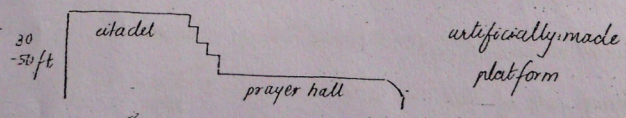
There are 9 Buddhist caves dated around 6th century A.D

Similar to Ajanta caves

④ Junagadh Caves

In Gujarat

Main feature - Uparkot meaning citadel



The Uparkots are 30-50ft high artificial platform connected by staircase to the hall

⑤ Nashik Caves

23 Buddhist caves belonging to Hinyana Period

Dated around 1st century AD

Called as Pandav leni

Spiritual presence of Buddha denoted by throne and foot prints

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(6) Montpreris / Mandapeshwar Caves -

located in Mandapeshwar

Dated to 8th Century AD

Only Brahmanical cave to be converted into a Christian cave

II) SCULPTURES

- One new school was added - Sarnath School of Sculpture

Developed at Sarnath

Use of Cream coloured sandstone

Nakedness was lacking - more dress and properly covered

Halo is more decorative

- Even metal sculptures developed during this age

Ex: Sultan ganj Buddha (7.5 ft in height)

III) STUPAS

- less number of stupas constructed
- Best Ex: Dhamekh Stupa near Sarnath

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IV) TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE

Divided Temple architecture began and also reached its climax during Gupta Age

Development occured in five stages

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FIRST STAGE:

(I) Flat roof Temples

(II) Square Temples

(III) Shallow pillared approach at the front

(IV) On low platforms

Ex: Temple No.17 at sanchi (MP)

SECOND STAGE:

Continued - Flat roof, Square
pillared approach (not shallow)

Now on high or upraised platforms.

Covered ambulatory around the sanctum Sanctorum

Even instances of two storeyed temples also found.

Ex: Parbati temple at Nachnakuthara in MP.

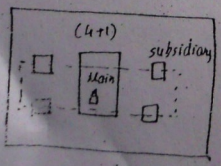
THIRD STAGE:

Continued - Square temple
Pillared approach
High platform
Covered ambulatory

* Flat roof not seen.

low and squared 'Shikhas' (curvilinear tower)

Introduction of Panchayatan Style of temple making



Concept of subsidiary shrines
Main temple is rectangular
Crucified ground plan (⊕)

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* Aihole = cradle of Indian Architecture

Ex: Dashavatar temple at Deogad Deogarh (U.P.)

Durga Temple at Aihole, Karnataka

⇒ Nagara style is a successor of third stage of temple making

FOURTH STAGE

Rectangular temples

Rest all features continued

main shrine became more rectangular

Ex: Ter temple at Solapur

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FIFTH STAGE

Circular temples with shallow rectangular projection

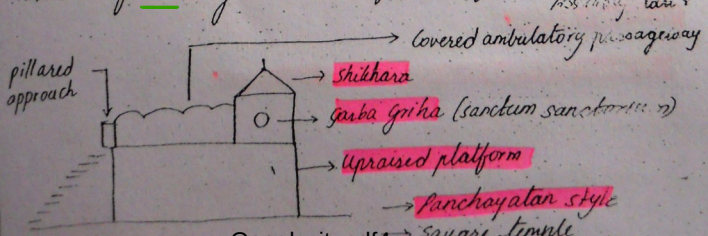
Rest all features continued

Ex: Maniyar Math at Rajgir

STYLES

Nagara School Of Architecture

- Successor of 3rd stage so had all features of it



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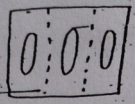
Absence of tank in the temples (unlike Dravidian style)

Division of each wall into 3 vertical planes called Rathas



sculptures made in these 3 planes.

All three as a whole are called Triratha

Later Pancharatha, Saptaratha and even Navratha planes/plan originated

Prominent in Northern and central parts of India, except peninsular India.

3 subschool developed under Nagara style

1. Odisha School
2. Khajurao School
3. Solanki School

1. Odisha School

Ex: Konark temple (13th cent) - Also called Black Pagoda → Gate of black sandstone.

Jagannath temple, Puri

Lingaraja temple (1100 AD)

Believed that during sunrise first rays enter this dis

Unique features: Exterior walls are lavishly decorated through intricate carvings but interior walls are plain

- No use of pillars

Instead of pillars, iron gridders were used, to support roof

- Shikhara is called Deul and is almost verticle till the top when it suddenly curves sharply inwards

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→ Kalash

→ rises vertically

The mandaps are called Jagmohana

Ground plan of the main temple is square

Temples have boundary walls.

Dated around: 8th - 13th century.

(5) Khajurao School / Chandel School:

Developed by Chandel rulers

Features:

- Both interior and exterior is lavishly decorated with intricate carvings
- Sculptures based on erotic themes on the walls of temples
  - i.e based on kamasutra.
- Donot have boundary walls
- Have 3 elements: i) Garba Griha
  ii) Assembly hall
  iii) Portico* - verandah surrounded by pillars
- Shikhars also present in the subsidiary shrines (gives impression of a mountain range)*
- Platform relatively high
- 10th - 11th century

Ex: Kandariya Mahadev Temple

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③ Solanki School

To Gujarat by Solanki Rulers

Ex: Modhera Sun Temple

Solankis - branches of Chalukya rulers

- Massive rectangular stepped tank. On steps there are small temples.
- The walls of the central shrine are devoid of carving and are left plain as the temples faces the east, and every year at the time of equinoxes the sun shines directly into this central shrine

Ex 2: Dilwara temple in Mt. Abu

Highest Jain Pilgrimage

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TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE IN SOUTH INDIA

Four styles developed

i) Dravidian
ii) Vesara
iii) Nayaka
iv) Vijaynagara

In pallav school, Temple architecture developed

Ruler: Mahendravarman I.Style: Simple Rock-Cut Caves (called Mandapas). These are pillared halls dug into rock faces. The pillars are massive, square at the top and bottom, and octagonal in the middle. They are heavy and lack deep ornamentation.Example: Mandagapattu (the first rock-cut temple in Tamil Nadu).

Stage I - Mahendra group
Rock cut architecture
Word Mandap is used instead of temple

Narasimhavarman I (Mamalla).

Stage II - Narsimha group
- Decoration in rock-cut caves
- Mandap now became rathas. The biggest rath was called as Dharmaraj Rath and small was called Draupadi Rath
- Dravidian style: ~~was precursor~~ of Dharmaraj Rath was a precursor

Stage III - Rajsimha Group — Ruler: Narasimhavarman II (Rajasimha).
- Development of real structural temples (not inside the [illegible])
Ex: Shore temple at Mahabalipuram, TN
Kailashnath temple at Kanchipuram

Stage IV - Nandivarman group
- Development of small temples
- Dravidian style continued

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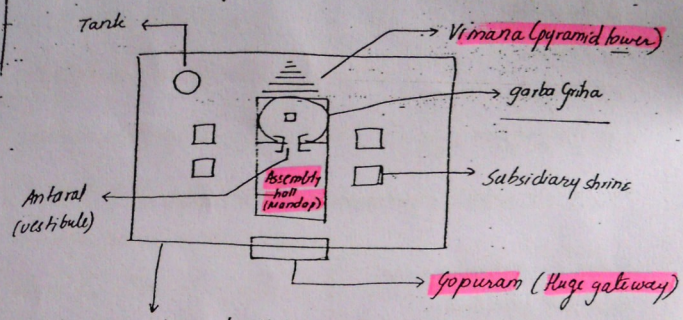
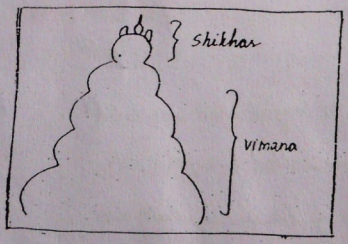
DRAVIDIAN STYLE OF ARCHITECTURE

↳ Oldest style of architecture.





⇒ Shikhara is a crowning element at the top of the temple. It is shaped like an octogonal cupola. It is equivalent to 'Amalak' and 'kalash' of Nagara style of architecture.

Entrance of the temple's Garbha griha has sculptures of Dvarpals guarding the temple (whereas in Nagara style there are images of Mithun and rivers Goddess Ganga and Yamuna are seen at entrance of Garbha Griha)

There is only one vimana in Dravidian (unlike Nagara where there are multiple shikhars ie. also in subsidiary shrines)

Gwified ground plan and upraised platform.

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Ex: • Brihadeshwara temple at Tanjore, TN
was made by Raja Raja I
Last yr, 2011, it completed 1000 yrs as it was built in 1011

• Gangaikonda cholapuram temple.
Son of Raja Raja I, Rajendra framed a place after conquering Gangetic delta, to commemorate his victory
konda = victory.

* Dravidian started during pallavas but flourished during the rule of Cholas.

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⇒ Functions of temples:

i) Religious.
ii) Administrative centres
iii) Controlling vast areas of land (in terms of revenue collection)
iv) Centre of education

Various sources of revenues for temples? (NCERT 11th, Chola kingdom)

• Donation
• Revenue collection

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Bronze Sculpture : NATARAJ

i) Upper right hand - holding drum.
The drum represents Sound, great Sound from which all creations spring

ii) Upper left hand - Eternal fire
Represents destruction which is an inevitable counterpart of creation.

First destruction and then creation, not vice versa

iii) Lower right hand - raised in gesture of benediction (अभय मुद्रा)
which reassures the devotee not to be afraid

iv) Lower left hand - points towards his upraised foot as the path of salvation

v) He dances on a small dwarf which represents ignorance and the individual ego

vi) Matted locks indicates river Ganga which flows down to

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